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ABSTRACT

Comparisons were made of the contexts and incidence of child- and teacher-initiated behavior in kindergarten through third-grade classrooms in Japan and the United States. The "Child/Teacher Initiation Behaviors Checklist" was developed and used to obtain data on nine general initiation categories, such as: gains attention; initiates classroom control; and makes decision without teacher direction. Observations were made in 20 U.S. kindergarten classrooms and in 10 classrooms at each of the primary grade levels. In Japan, 12 classrooms at each grade level were observed. Kindergartens in both countries were designated as either child-directed or teacher-directed. Findings demonstrated that teacher-directed environments have significantly fewer child initiations in the classroom. The greatest cross-cultural difference in teacher initiations was in the child-directed kindergartens. In the United States, initiation frequency of children making unsolicited comments decreased through third grade, while in Japan unsolicited comments increasd from first through third grade. During primary years, frequency of initiations was consistently higher in Japan. While affection was not initiated very often by teachers in either country, children initiated more affection in child-directed environments. U.S. teachers gave more praise to students than did Japanese teachers. It is concluded that findings do not support formalizing education for young children to improve their learning. Among other recommendations, it is suggested that teachers should encourage child initiations in their classrooms. (Author/RH)

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A COMPARISON OF CHILD AND TEACHER INITIATIONS FOR KINDERGARTEN THROUGH THIRD GRADES IN JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES

By

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and

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ABSTRACT

In this study I did a comparative analysis of the initiation variable in classrooms grades kindergarten through third in Japan and the United States. Forty-eight classrooms in Japan and 50 classrooms in the United States were observed with the "Child/Teacher Initiating Behavior Observation Checklist."

A trend in the United States is to formalize learning at an earlier age so the children will demonstrate better results on tests. Developmentally, there is a contradiction to formalized education for young children. Since Japan's 10-year-olds in international studies are rated number one in math and science test scores, I thought it would be advisable to study their early teaching-learning environments.

The study demonstrated that teacher-directed environments, indeed, do have significantly fewer child initiations in the classroom. The only teacher-directed environments that had equal child and teacher initiations were Japan's third grade. Only in child-directed environments did children initiate more frequently than teachers. Japan's child-directed portion of kindergarten had 255% more children initiations than did the United States' child-directed kindergartens.

The biggest difference in teacher initiations between Japan and the United States was in the child-directed kindergarten. Japanese teachers do not initiate in child-directed environments, while the United States teachers still make 1/3 of all initiations. Japan's first grade teachers had the highest initiation frequency, whereas, in the United States the teacher-directed kindergartens had the highest teacher-initiated frequency.

The initiatiation frequency of children in the United States making unsolicited comments decreases through third grade, while in Japan the unsolicited comments increase from first through third grade. By the third grade the children in Japan are making three times as many unsolicited comments as children in the United States.

Affection is not initiated very often by teachers in either country. Children initiate more affection in the child-directed environments than in teacher-directed environments. Teachers in the United States give more praise comments to their students than do teachers in Japan.

Ninety percent of the teacher initiations for both countries come in the general categories of "asking for information, giving directions, and controlling behavior."

Generally, the children initiate more frequently in Japan than the United States. Japan's classrooms, even though they are teacher-directed, have more child-initiation behaviors than do the United States' classrooms.

In view of the high test scores in science and math and greater initiation frequency of Japanese students, the highly teacher-initiated or formalized environments are not supported by this data for kindergarten through third grade.

INTRODUCTION

"I hear and I forget,
I see and I remember,
I do and I understand."
Ancient Chinese Proverb

For thousands of years man has made a distinction between learning that is understood and learning that is heard. Today is no exception. As our knowledge continues to grow rapidly, understanding our world has become imperative. Our distant world neighbors are now within a few hours from us, and our perceptions of one another do affect us either directly or indirectly.

Japan is a country that has gained much recognition in the last ten years both economically and educationally. Glowing reports can be found in magazine and newspaper articles and books that have praised the Japanese educational achievements. These achievements have created a desire within me to study the Japanese educational system by "seeing" and "doing" rather than by hearing. It is my intent to probe some educational aspects of Japan and compare it to the U.S. for the purpose of understanding one another better.

I have spent the last eleven years at the University of Idaho, Moscow, Idaho, teaching and researching about childhood ages three through eight. My work as the Director of Early Childhood Education Lab School at the University of Idaho enhanced my desire to study Japan's early childhood educational system.

A friend of mine, living in Sendai, Japan, put me in contact with M. A. Garner, Professor of English Literature at Miyagi Women's College. She in turn introduced me to the President of Miyagi Women's College, Dr. T. Yamagata. Through much correspondence with Dr. Yamagata, the Institute of Christian Culture (the research institute) at Miyagi Women's College invited me to study with them.

Miyagi Women's College was particularly appropriate as it housed kindergarten-age children on campus. The Yochien attached to Miyagi Women's College includes three-, four-, and five-year old children. It is a beautiful new campus located in the northern part of Sendai city, with an enrollment of 2,630. The staff connected with the yochien and the faculty of the college were very cooperative and helpful in assisting me with my comparative research task.

The following pages include the theoretical basis for the study, purpose of the study, development and description of the "Child/Teacher Initiation Behaviors Observation Checklist," description of population, observation process, findings of the study, and summaries, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

THEORETICAL BASIS FOR THE STUDY

The United States currently is experiencing some confusion as to what quality early childhood education really is. Some argue that quality can be found when children move "back to basics." Some early childhood educators say, as yet, we have not found the basics, so how could we get back to them? I am not trying to argue for or against "back to the basics," but rather to identify a basic component in any positive and productive early childhood educational setting.

Since Johnson's administration, and the implementation of Head Start in 1965, the United States has been focusing more attention on education of young children. Research has been conducted to approve or disapprove early education. The early Westinghouse Study stirred much attention as to the effectiveness of Head Start Programs. Moore and Moore (1975) in their book entitled, Better Late Than Early, cite a great deal of research that suggests the older the child is when he starts school, the better the child will do throughout school life. On the other hand Schweinhart (1980), in his well known Perry Preschool Project, has demonstrated that children who have had preschool achieve significantly better in reading, math and writing. Lazar (1979) also confirms the positive effects of early education. He compiled numerous research studies and made the conclusion that of those children who have experienced early education, significantly fewer children are placed in special education and fewer children are retained one grade level. The conclusion I have made from these seemingly conflicting research

findings, is that it is not whether the child goes to school, but rather what happens to the child at school.

Through my experiences I have seen children in second grade and third grade that actually hated school and were a constant management problem. However, these same children started their school career with enjoyment, excitement, and enthusiasm. I always find myself experiencing sadness and anguish for these children, for I believe that learning is as natural as breathing. Yet, these children have experienced some very unnatural events to have developed hatred for school. Why do some young children acquire a dislike for learning while others seem to survive so well? This question has led me to the component I am researching in this study.

A self-directed activity is an activity that is initiated by self. As an adult when you make a decision to accomplish a task, you direct your own behavior and do the things necessary to accomplish the task. A child-directed activity is one in which the child initiated a behavior. A teacher-directed activity is an activity which the teacher initiated for the children.

Torrance (1980) wrote the following about self-directed activities after his visit to Japan:

> "In the future, it seems certain that we shall have more self-directed learning at all levels of education. Already we have found in gifted education that self-directed learning skills differ from those required for success in teacher-directed learning. For this reason, many of our most gifted students fail when placed in programs requiring self-directed learning. To avoid such failure, there is much that we can learn from Japanese education from preschool through graduate and professional education." (p. 13)

A child-directed or teacher-directed activity can be identified by looking at who initiated the behavior. For example, if a teacher asked a child a question, the child's response was not self-initiated, hence, it was a teacher-directed response. On the other hand, if a child asked the teacher a question, without being prompted by the teacher, it was a child-directed response.

For every behavior observed there is a motivation for that behavior. Children and teachers initiate behaviors in classrooms. It is possible to distinguish between child- and teacher-initiated behaviors, without knowing the motivation for these behaviors.

Lillian Katz (1983), in discussing the upcoming international comparisons on achievement conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, stated the following about early education in the United States:

> "Typically, a lot of programs for children lack intellectual engagement, partly, I think, because we confuse academic instruction with intellectual learning. In many programs, we are introducing young children very early to academic work, but preschool programs that produce lots of academic learning don't necessarily provide rich intellectual stimulation. On the contrary, much academic work is intellectually deadening." (p. 3)

Inherent in academic learning is teacher-directedness. Teachers who stress academics to four- and five-year olds must become directive as the child's natural development leads him to learning about his environment through self-directed play.

When children are involved in "rich intellectual stimulation," they must help set the stage. A child who brings a tadpole to the classroom is very excited about it. He will describe some of its behaviors (a scientific process) to other children and the teacher. The child initiated bringing the tadpole. If the teacher asked him to bring it,

his excitement probably would not be as keen because it was an assignment and not a self-directed activity.

When children initiate a behavior, several things occur to the child:

1) The child makes a decision;
2) The child makes a choice;
3) Inherent in the choice is learning responsibility;
4) The child is taking a risk;
5) The child internalizes from the success or failure; and
6) The child's concept of self is formed from factors within.

When a teacher initiates a behavior, different kinds of things occur to the child:

1) The child learns to conform to authority;
2) The child has no apparent alternatives;
3) Responsibility to the teacher is learned;
4) The child does not initiate the risk personally;
5) The child learns from the success or failure of the experience through external forces; and
6) The child's concept of self is formed from factors outside of self.

I believe both children and teachers should be initiating behaviors in a classroom. However, when children are not encouraged or even allowed to initiate behaviors, their concept of self will be built only through external sources. This may not seem to be such a problem for an excellent student as for the child who has learned to hate school because he is not allowed to bring part of himself to the classroom. When a child initiates a bahavior, many good things are happening.

Young children, generally, learn more from concrete experiences than abstract experiences. At this age the children are still organizing their environment and trying to make sense out of their experiences. Being able to initiate, I think is of paramount importance for this organization to happen. For the child to bring his

understanding of the world to a new experience, he must be free to initiate experimentation, questions, and conclusions. Otherwise, he is asked to learn conceptually without experiencing internal gratification. Internalization is a must if the child is to sense "rich intellectual stimulations." If the child does internalize, he will be able to use that information again and again.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The primary purpose of this research is to do a descriptive comparative analysis of initiation behaviors between teachers and children in classrooms in Japan and the United States with children age five (kindergarten) through age eight (third grade). Vogel (1979), Bloom (1974), Cogan (1984), Christopher (1983), and Torrance (1980) have all reported very positive aspects of the Japanese educational system. Many of the findings are reported in educational achievements and technological advancments through self-discipline. The result of the 1970 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement placed 10-year-old Japanese students on top in the sciences. Because the Japanese educational system seems to be on record as a system with high achievements, I decided to do a study that looks inside the classrooms and make some comparisons between Japan and the United States.

Many of the studies I have read give general outcomes of the Japanese system. I am interested in looking at the underlying reasons for these outcomes. Certainly finances and policies have an effect on schools and their achievements. Much has been written about such. However, I am more interested in looking into the classrooms, for I believe it is in the classrooms where attitudes about learning and self-discipline are developed and achievement standards are set.

This study is to show what is happening in classrooms regarding initiation. It will answer questions like, How often do students

initiate compared to teachers? Do kindergarten children have more freedom to initiate than third graders? Are there similarities between Japan and the U.S. regarding initiation?

The data gathered will be presented in a comparative manner. Since no baseline data is available, a comparative analysis will give more information about this variable in the classroom.

DEVELOPMENT AND DESCRIPTION OF THE "CHILD/TEACHER INITIATION BEHAVIORS OBSERVATION CHECKLIST"

As discussed in a previous section, my belief that child initiation behavior is a critical variable in a productive classroom could not be verified in a review of the literature. Open classrooms, teaching strategies, interaction analysis and other concepts have been researched and are readily available for review. However, I believe that regardless of what teaching style or method of organization the teacher uses in her classroom, there are certain components that exist in a good learning environment. One of these components is the freedom for the child to initiate questions, comments, and other statements that promote an attitude of personal responsibility for learning.

An instrument that measures initiation behaviors of children and teachers was developed. Kindergarten through third grade classrooms were observed to help organize an observation checklist. During the fall and spring semesters of 1983-84, I had two doctoral candidates with experience both at the early childhood education level and at the college level help me collect this data. Ten classrooms at each grade level were observed to identify the kinds of initiations occurring in the classroom. The behaviors were identified, grouped, and labelled. From that process the "Child/Teacher Initiation Behaviors Checklist" was developed. The observation checklist was field-tested and minor revisions were made (see checklist p. 58).

The field test revealed that 15 minutes of observation would establish the patterns of initiations in a classroom. More time only

gave more data, but did not change the initiations patterns. Hence, the observation time was limited to 15 minutes.

A total of nine general initiation categories were defined for teachers and children. Following is a description of the categories.

1. GAINS ATTENTION
   a) Offers to help; Teacher/Child (T/C) approaches another to provide help. e.g. "Could I help you fold the paper?"

   b) Asks for help; T/C verbally asks another for help in accomplishing some task or game. e.g. "Would you help me find the answer?"

   c) Asks for information; T/C verbally asks another a question. e.g. "What color is this?" or "Would you all like to go outside and play?"

   d) Gives unsolicited information; Child talks without being asked. e.g. "I like having you as my friend." or "This isn't mine."

2. GIVES SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS
   a) For use of materials; T/C tells another how to use material. e.g. "Circle the K sound." or "Read the next paragraph."

   b) For topic of discussion; T/C tells another what to discuss. e.g. "Let's talk about the weather today." or "Teacher, I want to tell you about my new puppy."

3. INITIATES CLASSROOM CONTROL
   a) Seating arrangement; T/C tells another specifically where to sit or stand. e.g. "Jesse, come set next to me." or "Sally, go stand next to the sink."

   b) Group behavior; T/C tells two or more how to behave. e.g. "When everybody is quiet I'll continue reading." or Okay, John, Sally, and Akita may go to the bathroom."

   c) Individual behavior; T/C tells one how to behave. e.g. "Tom, it is my turn to talk now." or "Sally, go turn the lights off."

4. INITIATES AFFECTION
   a) With child; T/C shows affection either verbally or physically to another child(ren). e.g. Hugs another child, holds hands or says "I like you."

   b) With adult; Same as 4.a except with an adult.

c) Other; T/C shows affection to an object. e.g. Talking to a doll and saying, "I love you," or petting a stuffed toy.

5. INITIATES HOSTILITY
   a) With child; T/C shows hostility either verbally or physically to another child(ren). e.g. In frustration a child hits another child or says, "Shut up, you stupid!"

   b) With adult; Same as 5.a except with an adult.

   c) Other; T/C show hostility to an object. e.g. In frustration kicks the bookcase or throws the doll across the room.

6. GIVES SELF PRAISE; T/C says something positive about his/her own performance. e.g. "Look, teacher, how nice I draw."

7. GIVES PRAISE TO OTHERS; T/C tells another something positive regarding a task. e.g. "What nice work you do." or "Very nice."

8. COMPETES WITH CHILD
   a) Verbally; T/C compares with another and makes some competitive statement. e.g. "I'm better than you." or "I can run faster than you."

   b) Physically; T/C compares with another and they become physical. e.g. If a child says to another, "I'm better than you," and the one child ignores the comment, you would record under 8.a. However, if the other child would fight back by hitting and saying, "On, no, you are not!" then you would record here.

9. MAKES DECISION WITHOUT TEACHER DIRECTION; In a TD environment, if a child or group of children goes from one activity to another without the teacher directing them, you would record here. For example, if the teacher was talking to the group and a child got up to get a drink without asking for permission, you would record here.

DESCRIPTION OF POPULATION

The comparative data presented in this research is from the United States (U.S.) and Japan. The data collected in the U.S. were from schools in Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho. They ranged from 250-600 students, grades kindergarten through six. These areas are considered to be rural, with city populations under 100,000.

The data collected in Japan were from the Sendai City area in the Tohoku District. This is considered somewhat rural for Japan. Six elementary schools were observed in both countries. Included in each country was an elementary school that was connected with a teacher training institution. The elementary schools in Japan ranged from 800-1200 students, grades one through six. Sendai has about 700,000 population.

In Japan the five-year-old children are included in the yochiens or nursery schools and not in the elementary schools. Most yochiens include children ages three through five, while the nursery schools in Japan include children ages zero through five. Nearly 100 percent of the five-year-olds attend yochien or nursery schools; (64 percent attend yochiens; 25 percent attend nursery schools; and approximately 10 percent attend facilities supported by the employer).

Most of the yochiens in Japan are privately owned. Approximately 50 percent of the nursery schools are government supported. In the U.S. all the kindergartens observed were government supported and were part of the elementary school organization.

The teachers in the U.S. all hold standard elementary teaching certificates. All the kindergarten teachers had their kindergarten endorsement. Four years of college are required for this certificate. In Japan most of the elementary teachers had at least four years of college to obtain their certificate. However, for teachers of five-year-old children there are two types of certificates. First class requires a four-year program, while second class only requires a two-year program. Most teachers of kindergarten in this research had a second class certificate. Both require some general education and method courses. First class requires more courses in each area.

This research is based on initiation behaviors of children and teachers in kindergarten through third grade. In the U.S. 20 classrooms were observed for kindertarten and 10 each for grades one through three for a total of 50. In Japan twelve classrooms for each grade level were observed for a total of 48 classrooms.

OBSERVATION PROCESS

In the U.S. contact was made with the elementary school principals, and I worked with them regarding the use of their classrooms in this research. Since I personally knew the principals and/or teachers in each school, board approval was not required. An appointment was made with each principal to describe the observation process and schedule observation times.

In Japan, the process was more formalized, as I did not know any of the principals or teachers in the elementary schools. President Yamagata made contact with the school principals, after receiving approval from the central offices. A visit was made to each of the six schools to describe the purpose and process as well as schedule the observation times.

In both the U.S. and Japan, I stressed that involvement by the teachers should be made voluntarily; that we were collecting data through an observation checklist on initiating behaviors; that only 15 minutes of observation was necessary; that we wanted only to see typical classrooms; that collected data would not identify schools or teachers; and that the data would be consolidated and generalizations made from it.

In the U.S. the two doctoral candidates that helped me formalize the observation checklist also helped me collect the data for the research. We compared our findings in observing the same classrooms. After three months of working together a great deal, a comparison of the tallies would show a variance of three to five out of 45-60.

In Japan, this process was not as easy because of the language barrier. Three English-speaking Japanese students observed the classrooms and gathered the data before I visited the classrooms. I did visit the classrooms after the formal data were collected.

To accomplish this task Professor Hatayama, a specialist in child development, was assigned to me for the duration of this project. She went with me to all the schools and translated the research project into Japanese for the school personnel. Three students at Miyagi Women's College were identified to gather the data. Training in appropriate use of the instrument took four weeks. The kindergarten classes attached to Miyagi Women's College were used as a practicum site for the training. The categories were translated into Japanese to facilitate the observer's understanding.

To make sure that the observers were recording accurately, I developed the "Observers Accuracy Analysis Questionnaire" and had the observers complete it. They did very well as described below:

Observer A - 95% accuracy

Observer B - 100% accuracy

Observer C - 95% accuracy

Upon completion of the above questionnaire, the observers performed two 15-minute observations in the same classroom. Similarities and differences were identified from their recordings. Below are the total child (C) and teacher (T) initiation categories given in percentages for each observer:

SEGMENT I			SEGMENT II		
	C	T		C	T
Observer A	.25	.32	Observer A	.29	.38
Observer B	.36	.36	Observer B	.42	.30
Observer C	.39	.32	Observer C	.29	.32
	1.00	1.00		1.00	1.00

You will note that with teacher initiations there is less variance than with child initiations. The differences between the high and low for Segments I and II for T are .04 and .08 respectively, while the differences between high and low for Segments I and II for C are .14 and .13 respectively. Since there is only one teacher and many students, the probability for variance is much greater with student recordings. Also for both these classes the children were very active.

When looking at the nine categories, the observers grouped their findings with a great deal of similarity. Categories 1, 2, and 3 accounted for 90% or more of the total observation tallies for each observer. This instrument identifies general patterns regarding teacher and child initiations in classrooms with reliable accuracy.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The data in this section focuses on initiations by either teacher (T) or child (C). The quantity of initiations were obtained from the observation checklist. Tables with means and SD are presented. Figures are also presented based on the averaged data per hour so comparisons between the two countries can be observed easily.

Kindergarten

The data for the kindergarten in my study were divided into two types of classrooms, teacher-directed (TD) and child-directed (CD). Initially this was done to verify a relationship between high child initiations and the environment being a child-directed one. However, after a review of the data, the differences between these two environments regarding initiations were obvious. Separating these two types of environments gave more information regarding the effects of teacher direction on child initiations. In the Japanese kindergarten a part of every day was a CD environment. For kindergarten, observations were made both in the TD and CD environments for comparison. However, for grades one through three, no CD environment was found. In the U.S. 20% of the kindergarten classrooms observed were in CD environments while approximately 30% of the daily schedule in Japan is spent in CD activities.

Figures 1 and 2 show the difference in the CD and TD environments between Japan and the U.S. regarding the percent of initiations performed by children and teachers. In both CD and TD environments the

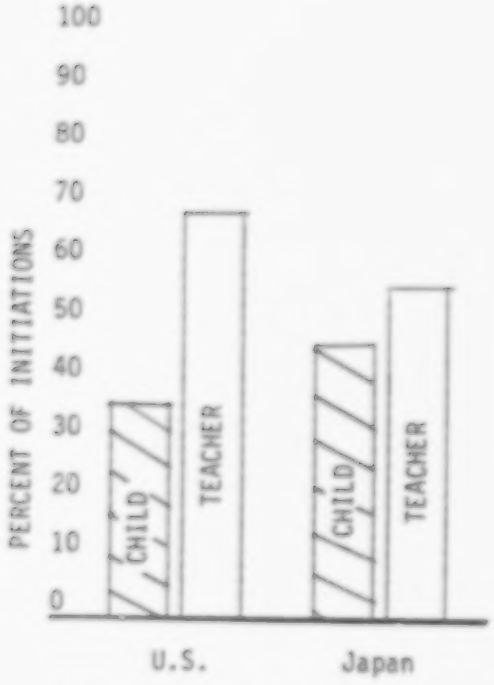

Figure 1. TD Environment

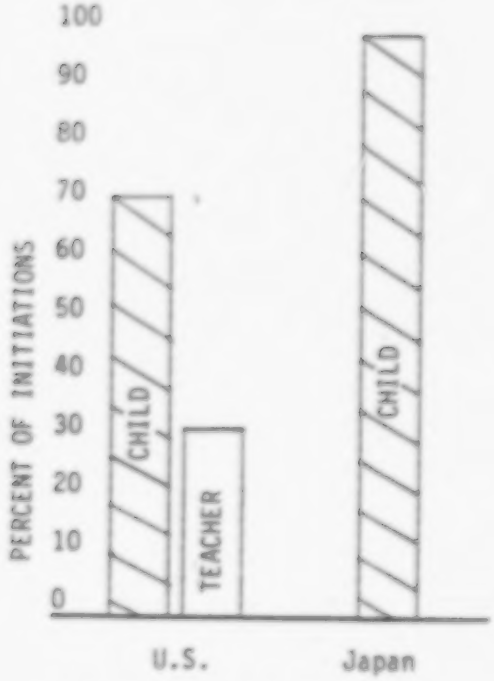

Figure 2. CD Environment

U.S. teachers initiated more often than did the Japanese teachers. Of these two environments, the most significant difference between Japan and the U.S. is in the CD environment. The U.S. teachers initiate 1/3 of the time, while the Japanese teachers do not initiate at all. In the TD environment the U.S. teachers initiated 10% more frequently than did the Japanese teachers. Therefore, in the Japanese kindergarten programs, children initiated more frequently in both the CD and TD environments than did the US.S children. Class size, as noted on the next page may account for some of this difference.

TABLE 1

Class Size in the Study

	United States				Japan			
	Low	High	$\bar{X}$	SD	Low	High	$\bar{X}$	SD
Kdgn	19	26	21.0	2.0	19	39	34.2	4.88
1st	19	27	21.6	2.55	35	46	38.3	3.47
2nd	17	29	20.3	4.02	34	45	39.6	3.35
3rd	18	28	23.6	3.09	34	45	39.3	3.34

Class Size

Table One has the data regarding the difference in class size from kindergarten through third grade. Included is the lowest and highest number of children in a classroom, the mean number per classroom as well as the standard deviations (SD). The head count was taken right before the observation was started.

The U.S. classrooms had, on the average, 57% fewer children than did the Japanese classrooms. Perhaps a reason for such a significant difference in class size is the actual head count versus the enrollment. In the U.S. some elementary school children leave the classrooms for music, special education, etc. In Japan the elementary children will experience all subjects together in one classroom. No child leaves his classroom group for another subject.

If class size is a variable that has an effect on teacher effectiveness, why does Japan have higher overall achievement for 10-year-olds than the U.S.? Perhaps other variables are more critical to a student's achievement than how many classmates he has.

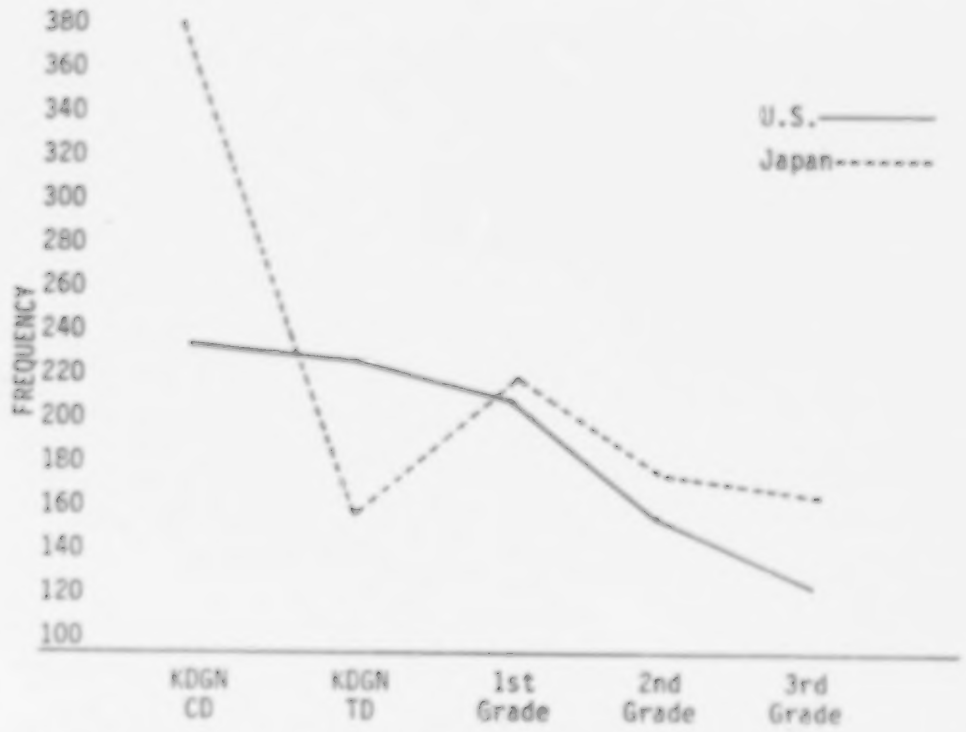

Figure 3. A Comparison of the Frequency of Total Teacher and Child Initiations per Hour.

Teacher and Child Initiation

As noted in Figure 3, the frequency of teacher and child initiations in the U.S. decreases steadily, with the biggest decrease coming between first and second grade. The biggest shift for the Japanese teacher and child initiations is between kindergarten CD and TD environments. The figure visualizes the big difference in the CD kindergarten environments between the U.S.'s and Japan's classrooms. It also demonstrates the apparent distinction between Japan's CD and TD kindergarten environments. In looking at the total initiations for Japan the TD kindergarten has the lowest frequency of initiations. Perhaps the rationale for this low frequency is the high frequency in the CD

environment. The TD environment always followed the CD time. So the children conceivably were ready to be directed as they were coming from a very active time.

First grades are very similar, with Japan having 20 more initiations per hour than the U.S. In both second and third grade the Japanaes teachers and students initiated 20 times to every 13 U.S. initiations by students and teachers. The frequency of initiations from first through third grade was consistently higher in Japan.

Teacher Initiation

When separating the teacher from the children initiations, Figure 4 shows a very similar pattern between the teachers of the two countries. Japanese teachers initiate less in kindergarten than they do in grades one through three. The highest frequency of teacher initiations for the U.S. teachers comes in the TD kindergarten, while in Japan it comes in first grade. The difference between Japanese kindergartens and first

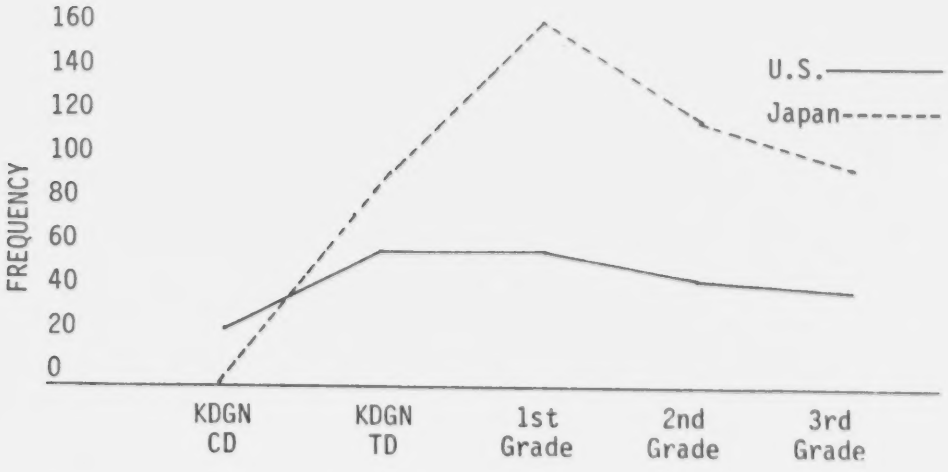

Figure 4. A Comparison of the Frequency of Total Teacher Initiations per Hour.

grade is much greater than the difference between U.S. kindergarten and first grade. Perhaps the reason for the greatest frequency in Japan's first grades is due to the big shift in curriculum and classroom management between kindergarten and first grade. Kindergarten children have much more freedom and are directed much less. They are not part of the elementary school.

TABLE 2

Total Teacher Initiating Behaviors				
	U.S.		Japan	
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD
KDGN CD	16.66	3.40	0	0
KDGN TD	37.0	13.11	20.36	9.64
1st	31.3	12.51	39.75	7.51
2nd	23.8	11.12	27.66	8.25
3rd	16.0	9.65	23.33	7.82

Table 2 demonstrates that in Japan the teachers show a greater frequency but less variance in the total initiating behaviors than do the U.S. teachers. This would verify a greater consistency in teaching styles in Japan than in the U.S. This, I think, reflects the literature that greater importance is placed on individualism in the U.S., while in Japan more emphasis is placed on the group and cooperation. More similarities will be found among Japanese teachers regarding initiation behaviors than among U.S. teachers.

Children Initiations

When looking at Figure 5 and Table 3, you will note that for the TD kindergarten through third grade few differences exist in child initiations. Hence, the differences when comparing the total initiation

behavior frequencies seem to stem from the teacher's rather than the student's initiations.

For the U.S., Figure 5 shows that second and third grade children have about 20 initiations fewer per hour than kindergarten and first grade children. This is not true for the Japanese second and third graders. Children initiations are increasing from first grade for Japan, while in the U.S. they are decreasing.

The figure also shows that for both countries the sharpest decline in children initiations is between CD and TD kindergarten environment. This data verifies that for CD environments there are significantly more student initiations than in TD environments.

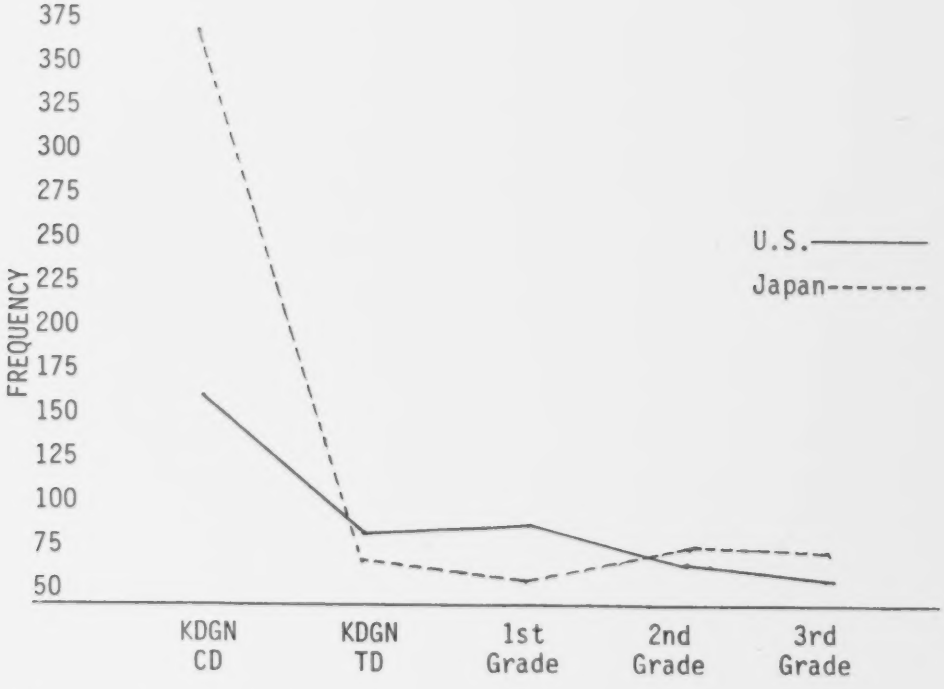

Figure 5. A Comparison of the Frequency of Total Children Initiations per Hour.

When comparing Figure 4 with Figure 5, you will see that teachers initiate more frequently at every level except in the CD kindergarten. For the U.S. in TD kindergarten, first and second grade children initiate 1/2 as frequently as the teacher. For third grade, children initiate 2/3 as frequently. In Japan in the TD kindergarten children initiate 3/4 as frequently as teachers; first grade children 1/3 as frequently; second grade children 1/2 as frequently; and in third grade there is almost a one-to-one initiation comparison.

TABLE 3

Total Children Initiating Behaviors				
	U.S.		Japan	
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD
KDGN CD	40.33	14.88	93.0	28.74
KDGN TD	18.08	7.96	16.54	7.83
1st	19.10	8.92	13.5	12.61
2nd	13.9	4.81	16.83	11.95
3rd	13.4	6.73	16.83	8.42

Table 3 demonstrates that, generally, there is less variance in the U.S. with frequency of children initiating. This is probably due to the fewer students in the classrooms in the U.S. It may also show a greater freedom that Japanese children have in their classrooms, leading to more variance in children's behavior from classroom to classroom.

When comparing the total number of child initiations, it seems obvious that there is much more movement in the CD Japanese kindergarten than in the CD U.S. kindergarten environments. The CD Japanese kindergarten has 255% more initiations per hour than does the CD U.S. kindergarten classroom.

Asking for Information

Figure 6 and Table 4 give data on how frequently the teacher asks for information in the classroom. Again the distinction between kindergarten and grades one through three can be made between Japan and the U.S. In the TD kindergarten environment, the Japanese teachers make 1/2 as many information-seeking type comments as the U.S. teachers. However, from first through third grades, the Japanese teachers ask more information-seeking questions than the U.S. teachers.

Table 5 and Figure 7 indicate that children in the CD kindergarten for both countries ask many more questions than in TD environments. From first through third grade the U.S. children as a few more questions, but both follow a very similar pattern. This information supports the idea that in CD environments children are asking more questions to gain information for problem solving.

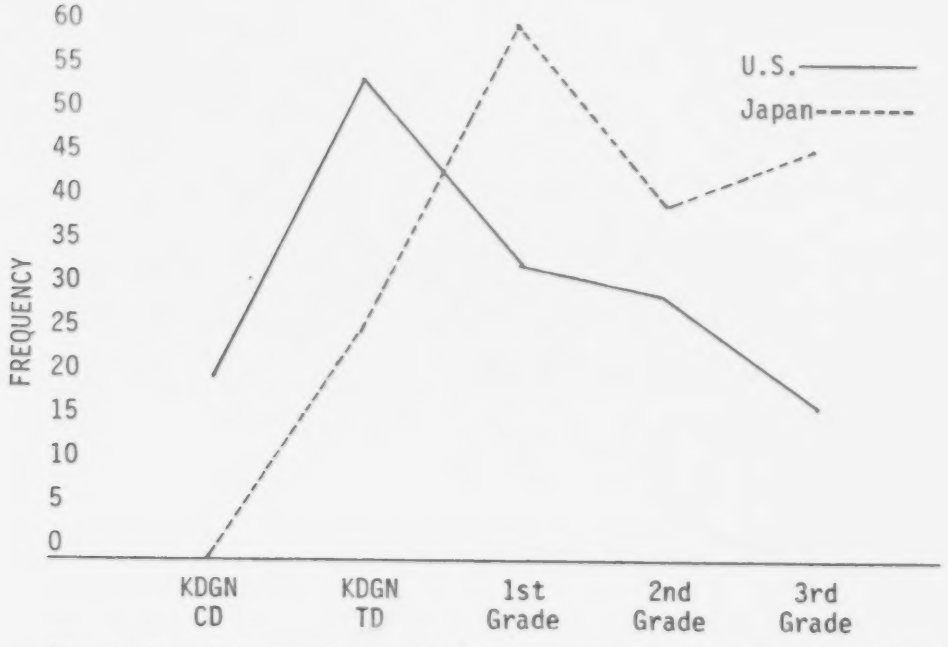

Figure 6. A Comparison of the Frequency of Teacher Initiated Asking for Information per Hour.

TABLE 4

Teacher Asking for Information				
	U.S.		Japan	
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD
KDGN CD	4.33	2.49	0	0
KDGN TD	13.09	8.20	6.0	5.53
1st	7.60	4.10	14.50	7.07
2nd	6.80	7.24	9.08	4.36
3rd	3.50	3.0	10.67	3.82

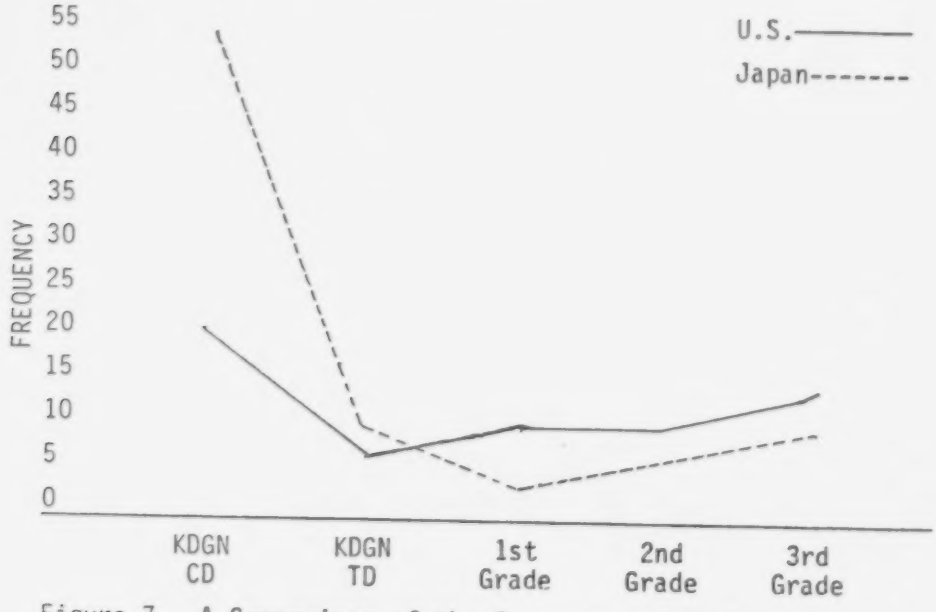

Figure 7. A Comparison of the Frequency of Children Asking for Information per Hour.

TABLE 5

Children Asking for Information				
	U.S.		Japan	
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD
KDGN CD	4.67	4.62	13.0	5.10
KDGN TD	1.33	1.18	2.0	2.70
1st	2.30	2.05	.58	.95
2nd	2.20	2.23	1.08	1.89
3rd	3.20	3.16	1.83	2.07

Asking for Help

Teachers do not ask for help from students. However, children do ask for help from their peers or from their teacher. Figure 8 and Table 6 show that the greatest difference between the U.S. and Japanese classrooms regarding children asking for help is in the CD kindergarten. For the U.S. the children show an increase in frequency each year, except in the third grade, which shows a slight decrease. In Japan almost the opposite pattern is identified.

A rationale for the difference in frequency of asking for help could be that the teachers in the U.S. may have several small groups working simultaneously, while in Japan the children are in one group for all subjects and activities. With several activities happening at the same time, children in the U.S. may have more need to ask for help. In Japan the children are all working on the same task. The classroom strategies in Japan are oriented to one group, which, perhaps, reduces the confusion and the need to ask for help.

TABLE 6

Children Asking for Help

	U.S.		Japan	
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD
KDGN CD	.33	.47	12.0	16.0
KDGN TD	.83	1.14	1.9	4.8
1st	3.30	2.76	.67	1.49
2nd	3.90	3.99	0	0
3rd	3.00	2.49	.31	.72

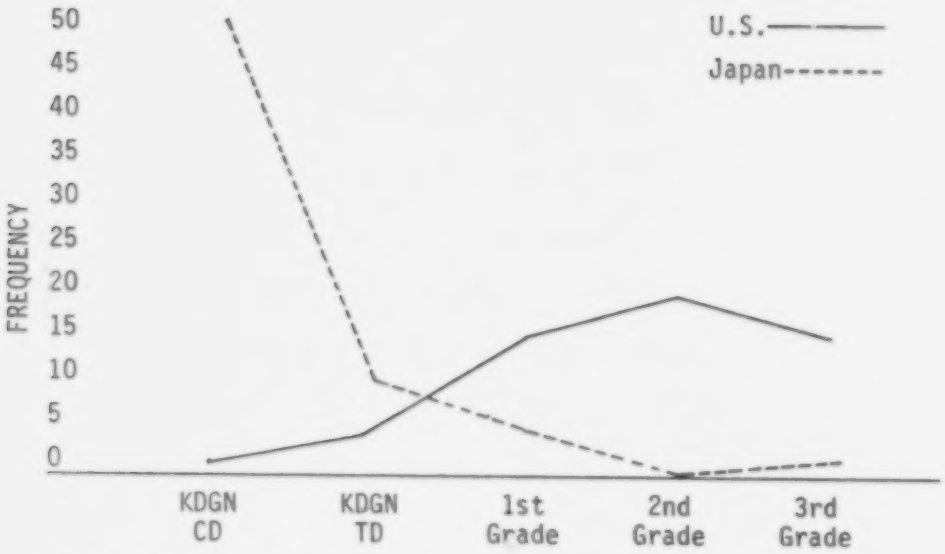

Figure 8. A Comparison of the Frequency of Children Asking for Help per Hour.

Giving Unsolicited Information

Table 7 shows that the variance in giving unsolicited comments for second and third grade is less for the U.S. than Japan. This undoubtedly is because there is less freedom to make such comments in the U.S. Figure 9 visualizes the differences in the patterns of the two countries.

The CD and TD kindergarten environments in both countries are very similar regarding unsolicited comments. However, from there through third grade the two separate their ways. By third grade, Japanese students make six times as many unsolicited comments as found in the U.S. classroom. I believe the teacher is the variable that determines whether unsolicited comments will be allowed. In the U.S. the steady decrease of unsolicited comments is expected. Generally, the third grader will "behave" better than the first grader because he is more mature. Maturity is measured by having learned not to make

inappropriate behaviors as determined by the teacher. Class size is another critical variable to consider in this pattern. Having approximately twice as many students in one classroom will undoubtedly increase unsolicited comments. However, during my observations I noted a greater freedom to talk without permission in Japan than in the U.S.

TABLE 7

Children Giving Unsolicited Information				
	U.S.		Japan	
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD
KDGN CD	20.00	9.27	18.33	7.45
KDGN TD	8.64	5.40	8.09	4.46
1st	5.70	6.97	8.42	8.71
2nd	3.50	3.72	10.83	7.54
3rd	2.30	3.69	13.00	7.95

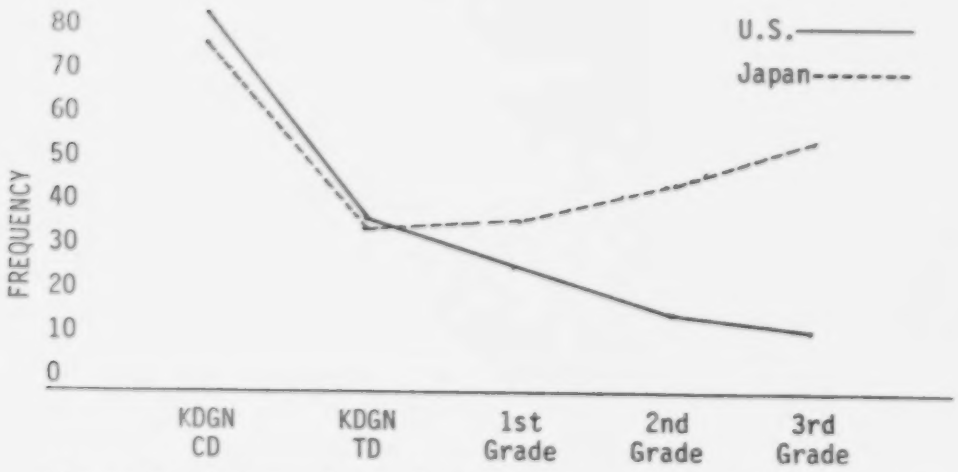

Figure 9. A Comparison of the Frequency of the Times Children Initiate Unsolicited Information per Hour.

Giving Specific Directions

The frequency of teacher initiations for the category, "Gives Specific Directions" is presented in Figure 10. Children initiations were rarely found in this category. The pattern for both countries is somewhat similar, with the Japanese teachers consistently initiating fewer direction-type statements than the U.S. teachers. Again, U.S. teachers in TD kindergarten and the Japanese first grade teachers have the highest frequency per hour.

Table 8 shows a greater variance among teachers giving directions in the U.S. than in Japan. This could be due, partly, to different activities happening simultaneously in the U.S., while that was never observed in Japan. This supports the individual teaching styles found in the U.S.

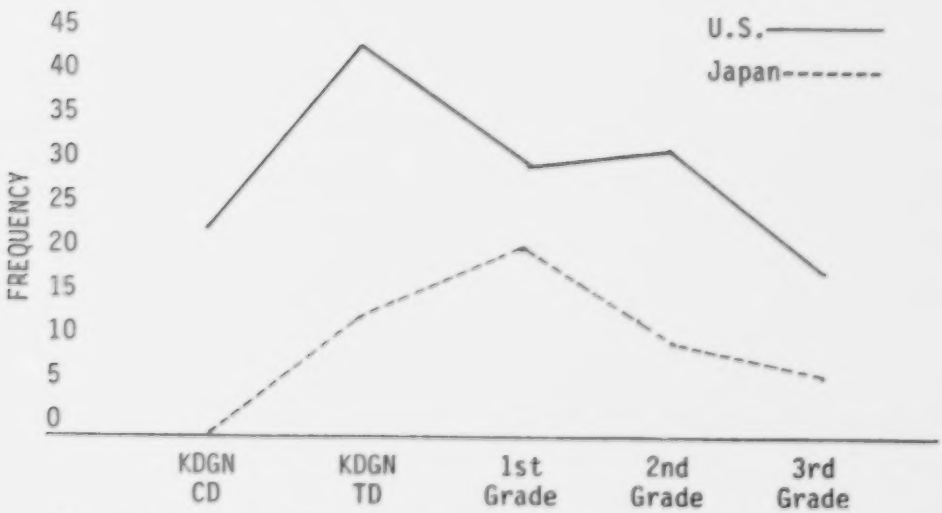

Figure 10. A Comparison of the Frequency of the Teacher Initiations of Giving Specifice Directions per Hour.

TABLE 8

Teacher Initiating Giving Specific Directions				
	U.S.		Japan	
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD
KDGN CD	5.33	.47	0	0
KDGN TD	10.16	5.97	2.81	2.41
1st	6.90	4.72	4.75	4.13
2nd	7.50	5.39	2.08	1.73
3rd	4.10	3.08	1.25	1.36

Initiating Classroom Control

When looking at the frequency of initiating classrom control, we see teachers doing it all. Figure 11 and Table 9 show a comparison of this element between Japan and the U.S. With the exception of CD kindergarten, the Japanese teachers initiated more control type behaviors in all grade levels.

There may be several explanations of this high frequency in first grade for the Japanese teachers. 1) The change of teaching approaches from kindergarten to first grade seems sudden. In kindergarten, which is part of the yochien or nursery school, the children experience much freedom. However, in first grade, the beginning of elementary school, that freedom diminishes rapidly. 2) In Japan the observations were conducted in May and June, which is toward the beginning of the school year. In the U.S. the observations were conducted in January through March, which is after the middle of the school year. During the first six to nine weeks of a school year more time is, generally, given to the task of establishing classroom routines than the remainder of the year. 3) Group size could also make a difference. The Japanese teachers have

almost twice as many students as the U.S. teachers. In addition, the classrooms in Japan work together as a whole, while in the U.S. the classrooms may be divided into three or more groups. The larger groups usually take more teacher direction comments for students to be managed properly.

From first through third grade the pattern between the two countries is similar. The number of controlling type comments is decreasing rapidly. This would indicate that for both countries, as children grow older they are learning more appropriate types of behavior.

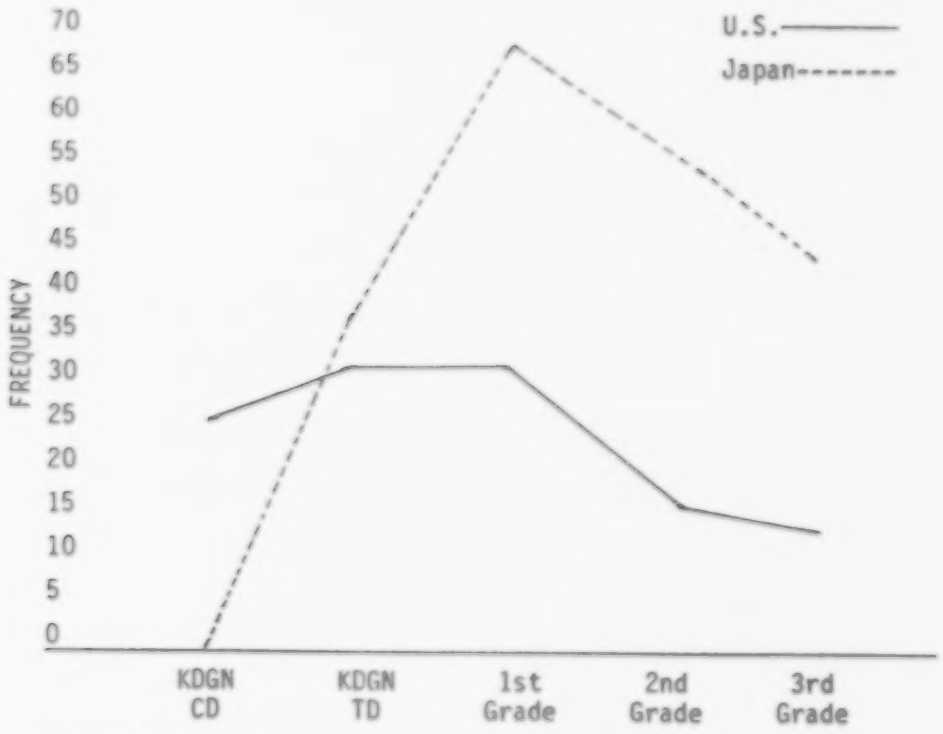

Figure 11. A Comparison of the Frequency of the Teacher Initiating Classroom Control per Hour.

TABLE 9

Teacher Initiating Classroom Control				
	U.S.		Japan	
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD
KDGN CD	6.00	4.32	0	0
KDGN TD	7.42	4.17	9.64	5.90
1st	7.50	4.10	17.16	7.58
2nd	3.50	4.00	13.58	6.45
3rd	3.00	2.32	10.58	5.85

Initiating Affection

Generally, neither children nor teachers in Japan and the U.S. show much physical affection. Teachers initiate less than do the students. The only place where affection seems to show any significance is in the kindergarten, with the children being the initiators. In Japan, in the CD kindergarten, children showed affection 52 times per hour. Their counterparts in the U.S. showed nine affections per hour. This indicates that children in the Japanese CD kindergarten show affection more freely than their equivalent in the U.S. The TD kindergarten environment in the U.S. and Japan were very similar, with a frequency of 2.8 and 3.2 initiations per hour respectively. In grades one through three no affection was observed. Affection is not considered a very important variable for either country, based on the frequency of initiations.

Initiating Hostility

Teachers in neither Japan nor the U.S. initiate hostility in their classrooms. Children do initiate some, but it seems to be insignificant except in the CD kindergarten environment. In Japan the children

initiated some type of hostile behavior 3.2 times per hour, while the same environment in the U.S. had 2.8 such initiations. I think this is very descriptive of a significant difference between kindergartens in Japan and the U.S. Kindergarten teachers in Japan do not have the need to intervene when some hostility is observed.

It is interesting to note that there is basically no difference in the frequency of hostility between the children in the CD and TD kindergarten environment in the U.S., where a frequency of 2.8 and 2.4 was recorded respectively. In other words, children tend not to act out their hostilities because the teacher's presence is controlling their behavior. In Japan even with the teacher's presence in the CD environment, they will act out hostility. In the TD environments the Japanese children do not initiate hostile behaviors. In the U.S. the children in kindergarten and first grade initiate similar frequencies. However, at second and third grade it diminishes completely.

Initiating Praise

Children in CD kindergarten in Japan initiate some kind of compliment about themselves eight times per hour. Their counterparts in the U.S. did not give one such initiation. From first through third grade no praise initiations were observed in Japan, while in the U.S. a few such comments were heard.

Children, based on this data, are more likely to praise themselves than others, with very little happening in either area. No child was heard giving praise to another child in Japan. I was informed that praise between children in Japan takes an implicit form. It is part of cooperation among the group. In the U.S., children in first and second grades were heard to give verbal praise only a few times.

In Figure 12 you will notice the comparison of the frequency of teacher-initiated praise comments. Generally, less praise is given by Japanese teachers. Teachers in the U.S. TD kindergarten environment praised four times more frequently than did the Japanese TD kindergarten teachers. Praise, generally, is considered as one method of control. This data again verifies that kindergarten teachers in Japan have less need to control children than do teachers in the U.S. Also, praise is initiated much less by teachers in both countries than giving directions, asking questions, or initiating classroom control.

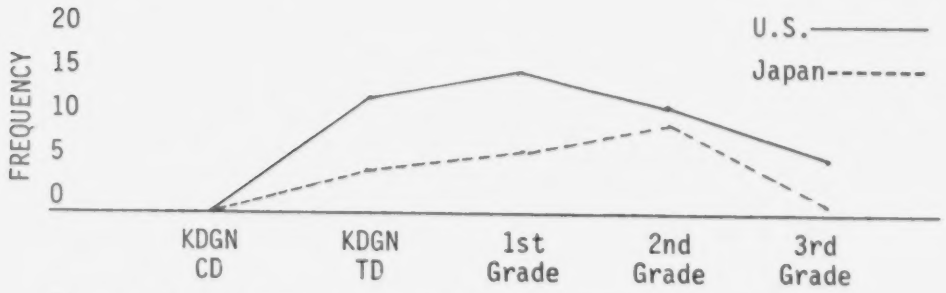

Figure 12. A Comparison of the Frequency of Teachers Initiating Praise Comments per Hour.

Competition

According to this research, teachers do not initiate any competitive behaviors with children in either Japan or the U.S. There is some competitiveness expressed verbally, but not physically, by children. Physical competitiveness was observed in the U.S. in kindergarten TD environment. Generally, I believe teachers in the U.S. fear physical competitiveness in an "open" environment. However, this did not occur in Japan. No physical competitiveness was observed in any of Japan's classrooms. This undoubtedly is due again to the emphasis placed on group cooperation, while individual competitiveness is a social taboo.

Children in Japan in the CD kindergarten evnironment did compete verbally four times per hour. Their counterparts in the U.S. initiated verbal competition 1.2 times per hour. Generally, there is very little competitiveness in either Japan or the U.S.

Making Decisions Without Teacher Direction

This category was to identify the frequency of children initiating behaviors unrelated to the activity in progress. Hence, the CD classroom is not appropriate to consider since children have the freedom to change activities without teacher direction. Figure 13 shows a great deal of similarity between the U.S. and Japan. Japan shows a consistent decline in the frequency of making decisions without teacher direction. This indicates that the older the children, the more conformity to teacher direction. In the U.S., I think the figure demonstrates the individual teacher's style of classroom management. Some teachers allow children to initiate during a TD classroom activity, while others don't. In general, however, it is not a frequent occurrence in either country to see the children initiating something different from the teacher's direction.

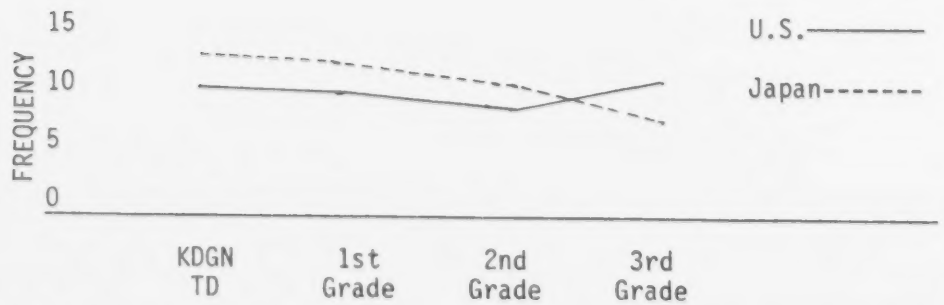

Figure 13. A Comparison of the Frequency of Children Making Decisions Without Teacher Direction per Hour.

SUMMARIES, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summaries

When looking at initiation as a variable in the classroom, there are some similarities and differences between Japan and the U.S. that need to be emphasized by way of summary.

1. The class size for Japanese schools is almost twice that of schools in the U.S.
2. In the CD portion of the Japanese kindergarten, teachers do not initiate, while in the U.S. the teachers continue to initiate about 1/3 of the time.
3. For the TD kindergarten environments, teachers in the U.S. initiate more frequently than do the Japanese teachers.
4. The greatest number of teacher initiations for Japanese classrooms comes in the first grade, while in the U.S. it is in the TD kindergarten classroom.
5. Children in TD environments in the U.S. initiate 1/2 as frequently as do teachers. In Japan it varies from first grade, where children initiate 1/3 as frequently as teachers, to third grade, where children initiate almost as often as teachers do.
6. For both Japan and the U.S. from grades one through three, there is a continuous decrease in the total number of initiations. Classrooms in Japan have a higher frequency of initiations at each of these grade levels.
7. Japanese teachers initiate less in kindergarten but more in grades one through three than U.S. teachers.

8. For both the U.S. and Japan, the CD kindergarten environment has the highest frequency of children initiations per hour. However, Japanese children initiate more than twice the frequency of the U.S. children.
9. In kindergarten the Japanese teachers initiate asking for information less than the U.S. teachers, but from grades one through three the Japanese initiate more.
10. Teachers for both the U.S. and Japan do not ask children for help. However, children do ask, with the highest frequency in Japan coming in kindergarten and decreasing through the third grade. In the U.S. the opposite pattern is observed.
11. The frequency of children giving unsolicited information is very similar between the two countries for kindergarten. However, from grades one through three the frequency increases for Japan, while it decreases for the U.S.
12. U.S. teachers consistently, from kindergarten through third grade, initiate more specific directions than do the Japanese teachers.
13. In all TD classrooms the Japanese teachers initiate more student controlling comments than the U.S. teachers. For both countries, from grades one through three, these initiations decrease steadily.
14. Initiating affection by children was observed only in kindergarten for both countries, with the higher frequency being in the CD environment. Teachers in both countries, basically, do not initiate affection.

15. Teachers do not initiate hostility. Children initiate some in kindergarten and first grade. For the U.S. kindergarten children there was no difference between the CD and TD environments. However, a difference is noted for the Japanese kindergarten children between these two environments.
16. Self praise is a very uncommon observation in either country. The only place it occurs with any frequency is in the Japanese CD portion of kindergarten.
17. Children, generally, do not give praise to others. Teachers in the U.S. give more praise to students than do the Japanese teachers. However, for both countries in the CD kindergarten environments, no praise was given by the teachers.
18. Very little competitiveness is observed in classrooms of either country.
19. Generally, children in both countries in TD environments make only a few initiations which are unrelated to the task at hand.

Conclusion

The following conclusions are based on the findings of this study. The data from the checklist as well as some personal observations are included.

1. The biggest difference between the two countries comes at the kindergarten level. The children in the CD kindergarten in Japan experience much less interference from their teachers than children in the U.S. There are also many more initiations in Japan's CD kindergarten environments.
2. For Japan the greatest frequency of teacher initiations comes at grade one. This is obviously due to the change in teaching

style and curriculum content between kindergarten and first grade.

3. For the U.S. the greatest frequency of teacher initiation comes in the TD kindergarten. This indicates that U.S. teachers tend to believe that kindergarten children need the most direction. Kindergarten in the U.S. is part of the elementary school and has more formalized curriculum. In Japan the kindergarten teachers are not teaching math, Japanese language or science, but rather music, arts, crafts, and movement. In the U.S., kindergarten teachers teach math and reading, which causes teachers to initiate with greater frequency at this level.
4. Students in Japan have a higher student/teacher initiation ratio in every level except first grade.
5. In the U.S. you will observe one classroom having three or more smaller groups at work, while in Japan this will never be observed. All the children in Japan do the same curriculum task. You will observe in the U.S. classrooms children leaving to go to music or other special subjects. In Japan all children experience all subjects and encounter the same learning activities.
6. Teacher initiations vary more between the grades than do children initiations. I think this demonstrates that initiations, whether performed by children or teacher, stem from the teacher's philosophy, organization, and procedures, not the child's need to initiate.
7. There is a positive significant correlation between CD environments and a frequency of child initiations. The same correlation exists for TD environments.

8. Second and third graders in Japan continue to feel free to make unsolicited comments, while in the U.S. this is not true. The sound level is higher in Japanese classrooms. Japanese teachers seemed less concerned that the children are quiet. Children are expected to talk together, as it is impossible for the teacher to attend to individual needs. Helping each other is taught in the Japanese classrooms, and it supports homogeniety within the group.
9. There is a steady decrease in child initiations from kindergarten through third grade for both the U.S. and Japanese classrooms. This indicates that the older the child, the fewer initiations needed to learn.
10. The teachers in the U.S., generally, feel more compelled to intervene and become an arbitrator in student conflicts. In Japan the group becomes the controlling device. To be different is to be scorned. If the teacher intervened in Japan, the group no longer would be in control, but rather the teacher. This is also supported by the Japanese teachers making fewer praise comments than the U.S. teachers. Praise is thought to be a controlling behavior.
11. Generally, there is little competitiveness expressed in either country, and children stay on the assigned task most of the time.
12. This study does not support formalizing education for young children to improve their learning. It does, however, suggest that teachers foster child initiations in their classrooms.

Broader Conclusions

Even though Japan's educational system has been patterned organizationally after the U.S., there are many differences. After spending four months in schools, I wanted to share more comparisons than this study specifically asked for. I decided this would be an appropriate place to discuss these.

I am pleased that I chose Japan for this study. Japan values education very highly. She has almost a 100% literacy rate, and the people are very gracious and helpful. Below I give broader conclusions with supporting data. They are all based on my studying, observing classrooms, and asking many questions about Japan's educational system.

1. Children through age five or six years experience freedom, both in and out of school, in Japan more than in the U.S. This freedom means less adult interference in directing their behaviors. Benedict (1947) says, "The arc of life in Japan is plotted in opposite fashion to that in the United States. It is a great shallow U-curve with maximum freedom and indulgence allowed to babies and the old" (p. 254).

   This freedom is expressed in CD environments in this study, which indicated that Japanese kindergarten children initiated more than twice as frequently as the U.S. CD kindergarten children. In the TD environment the Japanese children had higher student/teacher initiation ratios than the U.S. children.

2. Education is valued by all in similar ways in Japan, while in the U.S. it is valued in a variety of ways. In Japan getting an education for the children is the primary theme in family decisions. The Japanese save approximately 30% of their disposable income and

will spend most of it on tutoring schools (juku) through college (Cogen, 1984, and Vogel, 1979). The family life style is arranged to facilitate the best studying conditions. Children are often excused from family responsibilities. Parents, especially the mother, take a very active part in school affairs (Schiller, 1982). Several days each year are scheduled for parents to visit their child's school. The teachers visit the home at least one time per year. This is a time to get acquainted personally. A Japanese colleague told me that to know the mother is to know the child. So emphasis is given to know the family in order to serve the child better. Every school also has an active PTA.

In contrast, parents in the U.S. save approximately six percent and spend most of that on things other than educational objectives. Generally, the parents are involved at school only during parent-teacher conferences. Parents of primary grades may be involved on their child's birthday by bringing a special snack. No home visits are conducted. School is part of the family, but is not ichi-ban (no. 1) in most families.

3. Compulsory education in Japan is from first grade through junior high school. Up through junior high most children will go to the school designated for their attendance area. My research did not find the "examination hell" existing for elementary students. It begins the last year of junior high school. How well students do on this test will determine where they go to senior high school which, in turn, determines the kind of job or college available to them. However, throughout elementary and junior high school much preparation, in form of juku, is given.

In the U.S. compulsory education varies from age five to seven, dependent on the state, up through 16. The school one attends through high school is determined by the area of residence. Some private schools exist and have their own eligibility requirements, as in Japan. The primary difference I noted for the elementary students is the emphasis on tutoring schools after school hours. Almost all Japanese children are involved in these, while in the U.S. only a few children are involved in tutoring programs. In the U.S. tutoring is generally viewed as remedial, while in Japan it is enrichment.

4. Academics, particularly reading, do not seem to be stressed as heavily in Japan as in the U.S. In Japan there are four 45-minute periods in the morning and one 45-minute period in the afternoon. The Ministry of Education has a minimum number of periods required for each subject at each grade level. A minimum of 240 days are required.

   In the U.S. each State Board of Education determines the number of minutes required per day in subject areas. A minimum of 180 days are required. Below you will see a comparison for first grade in minimum required minutes per year for each country.

A COMPARISON OF MINUTES PER YEAR
REQUIRED IN U.S. AND JAPAN FOR FIRST GRADE

SUBJECTS	U.S.*	Japan
Reading and Language Arts	20700	
Japanese Language		12240
Math.	8100	6120
Science	4500	3060
Social Studies	4500	3060

*General average from a variety of states

In addition to the above, Japan has 3060 minutes of music, 3060 minutes of arts and crafts, 4590 minutes of P.E., including swimming, 1530 minutes of morals/ethics training and 1530 minutes of class meetings.

While observing classrooms in Japan, I observed that the 45-minute periods were closely supervised by chimes. Ten minutes are allowed between subjects for teachers and students to make transition. In the U.S. you will not observe chimes, but rather bells for recess, lunch, and school dismissal. The teacher has complete autonomy as to how s/he schedules the various subjects.

As noted above, the U.S. spends more time per year at each subject. The same is true through third grade. Japan spends 60% as much time in Japanese Language as the U.S. does in reading/language arts. Japan spends more time in music, art, and P.E. Academics do not seem to be stressed as heavily in the lower elementary grades in Japan as in the U.S.

5. No physical punishment is ever observed in the Japanese classrooms. On one occasion I observed 44 third grade students coming in to the audio-visual room to watch some slides on fire safety. The children were allowed to talk freely as they entered the room. With 44 in a small room the sound level was high. When the teacher put his index finger to his lips, the room got silent immediately. He began teaching and asking some questions. As he called on a child, the child would stand and give a response to the question. The honor given to the sensei (teacher) by the students and vice versa is a motivating force within Japan's classrooms.

I never observed a teacher use any form of physical discipline. My Japanese colleagues said that much emphasis is placed on internal motivation to conduct oneself according to the group's expectation.

The group expectations are developed early in the child's life. The mother, in her training of the child, will use the idea that being different from the group is a disgrace. The child learns that one's behavior must be consistent with the group's and may feel shame if he has behaved differently. It is not the teacher's motive to make the child feel shameful, but it is an internal source from earlier training. Hence, a subtle form of shame is a controlling factor in all of Japan's elementary classrooms.

Lanham (1966) says that early in the child's life the child is taught to restrain bodily movement and meaningless motion. Criticism is used to teach this restraint. However, one must remember that Japan is experiencing many changes, and child rearing is no exception.

Generally, in the U.S. physical punishment is used on a limited basis. The U.S. places a greater emphasis on obedience to teacher direction because the group is oriented to respond to individual desires and goals. The value Japan places on behavior conforming to the group appears to make the teacher less demanding. Children in the U.S. challenge teachers more frequently because they all act out of individual desires. Teachers as a result must demand greater obedience from children in the U.S. for the sake of maintaining any group identity at all. This research, for the U.S., indicates that the older the children, the less they initiate. I think, this is tied in to being obedient and doing what the teacher wants them to

do. Since obedience must be stressed to maintain a group, physical punishment must be available in case disobedience occurs.

6. A very obvious difference in the two countries is class size. Perhaps the reason Japanese can have an average class size of 40 and teach everyone the same thing is that, according to Clark (1978), Japan is a human relations society rather than an ideological one. Ideologies, such as obedience, are intellectual and principal in nature. When they are challenged, our being is threatened and self-defenses explode within us. However, Japan being a human relations society attaches itself to direct human contacts. It emphasizes the emotional side of the personality. The group becomes a norm for behavior and does not accept any great deviations.

In Japan children are experiencing concrete lessons. Each elementary school has a garden and animals to maintain and give proper care. The classrooms are also a laboratory of experiments. For example, a second grade classroom is learning that air becomes bubbles in water. To do this the teacher has 10 bowls of water, one for every four students. Each student is given a plastic bag, and they begin exploring air in water. Even though there are 40 students, teachers teach through direct and concrete experiences.

In the U.S. this kind of setting would lead to water fights and popping plastic bags. So, generally, teachers do not use experimentation as much, but rather abstract and indirect learning activities. This subtle, yet significant, difference between the two countries, I believe, is the underlying basis for the higher test scores in Japan. Why can a classroom in Japan handle a larger number of students and do more direct learning experiences? I

believe, it ties back to Clark's belief that Japan is built on human relations, not ideologies. The Ministry of Education allots each first grade class 34 periods throughout the year for discussion of any problems with which the class has to deal. The children are taught that the group decides, it is not an individual choice. The group's decision is binding for everyone and any deviance brings shame to the entire group.

7. The general aims of education in Japan are oriented more toward the process of learning than the content of learning. Below are examples of aims found in brochures that are printed for the parents and the community:

   a. Independent work on the part of children shall be promoted to make the children work out problems for themselves.

   b. Children shall be encouraged to make their minds strong enough to persistently achieve what they want.

   c. Teaching good manners shall be stressed in order to equip the children with enough knowledge to behave properly according to the occasions.

   d. Children shall be encouraged to make contributions to the comfort and welfare of the school by taking part in activities, such as cleaning the classrooms, posting notices, and taking care of plants and animals.

   e. Children shall be encouraged to have a charitable heart, to live a humane life.

   This also supports the human relations emphasis noted in #6 above. Children help maintain their environment. During one of my observations I noticed some children cleaning a hallway. It was not for punishment, but a regular responsibility to keep their school clean and beautiful.

   In the U.S. the aims of education are much more oriented to academics. Mastery of content is the primary focus, giving art,

music, and P.E. support if time allows. Children do not maintain their own classrooms. Custodians are hired for such tasks. The child, generally, does not have any strong attachment to the school. As a result children, generally, do not feel as much pride in their school, as is evidenced by the millions of dollars lost each year to vandalism.

8. Japan had a few male teachers at the kindergarten level, while for grades one through three thirty percent were male. However, in the U.S. there were no male teachers in the sample. It is much more common to have male teachers in the primary level in Japan than in the U.S.

9. Playgrounds are not supervised directly in Japan. All the children have recess and lunch breaks at the same time. The schools are built with three or four levels. The teachers' room is on the second floor, so viewing the playground is easy. Playground equipment is placed along the edge, allowing the center for large group activities.

In the U.S. we have taught children that adults are responsible for the behavior of children on the playground. Children are not trusted to be able to manage their own behavior. The playground must be supervised at all times by an adult. Law suits have been filed on this issue, which has made school administrators very sensitive. Field trips are also restricted in many school districts because of this.

Anybody who has ever visited Japan realizes that they take many field trips per year. Large buses are hired for these occasions. Parents do not accompany these field trips at the elementary level.

10. Lunches in Japan are served within each individual classroom by children. Again, the chidren are responsible for cleaning and returning the dishes to the central kitchen. The children in the U.S. eat in a large cafeteria. Many children eat together in one area. They are supervised by an adult. Children are not responsible for any cleaning, and teachers usually do not eat with them.

    Teachers in Japan are expected to manage the class for all activities throughout the day, including lunch. The teachers in the U.S. are not as attached to every activity of the child. This again gives emphasis to the group's cohesiveness, but I think, it also reflects the honor given to the sensei (teacher). A sense of debt is felt by the Japanese to the teacher because he has helped them accomplish the things they have in life.

Recommendations:

The recommendations listed below are realistic applications to the schools in the U.S. We could not implement many of Japan's educational ideals because of the cultural differences. However, I strongly believe that their informational comparative test scores do reflect a quality education. Here are some things that can be adapted to our educational system.

1. The home-school relationship must be strengthened. This is done through home visits, special guest day at school for one or both parents, parents becoming involved in PTA or other roles supportive of the school.

2. Provide concrete learning experiences in science and math. Children learn concepts in these areas through experience, discovery and manipulation, not abstract intellectual manipulation.
3. Stress reading less in first grade and replace it with more art, music, crafts and organized P.E. activities. Japanese first graders learn three written forms (Kanji, Katagana, Hirigana) of the language in five 45-minute sessions each week for 40 weeks. Reading is not overly stressed, as determined by the amount of time spent on it each week.
4. Art, music, P.E. and other non-academic subjects should be required of all children. Many of these activities are not experienced until later in elementary school, while all Japanese children begin each of these in an organized manner at first grade.
5. Require teachers in the U.S. to meet the minimum time requirements set by the state or local officials for the science and math subjects. Because of the individual freedom given to teachers in the U.S. many will not adhere to minimum time guidelines for various reasons.
6. Education must be supported more at all levels (financially, emotionally, culturally, and physically). Education in Japan is ichiban. People pay high respect to teachers. They receive the greatest honor because people are indebted to their sensei for their position in life.
7. Children need to be taught the value of a group. Each classroom becomes a micro-community. Learning how to communicate and live peacefully is a must for every classroom. Individualism has value only when it can be manifested effectively in a group.

8. Child initiation behaviors must be fostered by teachers. Strong concepts of self are learned by applying old experiences to new ones. Children must have the freedom to experience, discover and manipulate as they organize and formalize their world.

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CHILD/TEACHER INITIATING BEHAVIORS

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

SETTING:
Subject____
Grade Level____
Large Group Instruction____
Small Group Instruction____
Learning Centers____
Number of Children____

Generally is the classroom Teacher Directed or Child Directed? (circle one)

Teacher Directed OR

Child Directed

TIME OBSERVATION BEGAN_____

TIME OBSERVATION ENDED_____

OBSERVER_____

INITIATING BEHAVIORS	TALLY (C FOR CHILD, T-TEACHER)	FREQUENCY	C	T
GAINS ATTENTION				
a) offers to help				
b) asks for help				
c) asks for information				
d) gives unsolicited information				
GIVES SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS				
a) for use of materials				
b) for topic of discussion				
INITIATES CLASSROOM CONTROL				
a) seating arrangement				
b) group behavior				
c) individual behavior				
INITIATES AFFECTION				
a) with child				
b) with adult				
c) other				
INITIATES HOSTILITY				
a) with child				
b) with adult				
c) other				
GIVES SELF-PRAISE				
GIVES PRAISE TO OTHERS				
COMPETES WITH CHILD				
a) verbally				
b) physically				
MAKES DECISION WITHOUT TEACHER DIRECTION				